



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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### Environmental Quality Commission Recognizes Achievements of Kentuckians for Earth Day 2014

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (April 11, 2014) –The Kentucky Environmental Quality Commission today presented its annual Earth Day awards to individuals and groups who have made significant contributions to the environment. This year's event took place at the Berry Hill Mansion in Frankfort.

Recipients are as follows:

In an effort to clean up Floyds Fork, located in north central Kentucky, Teena Halbig and Sheron Lear formed the **Floyds Fork Environmental Association**. Over the past 22 years, members of the association have:

- removed 120 tons of tires, appliances, shingles, 55-gallon drums and other trash from the creek;
- alerted regulators to problems at Jeffersontown Wastewater Treatment regarding overflows and illegal bypasses. Now the plant is scheduled to be demolished and its flow rerouted, and
- served on a technical advisory committee with U.S. EPA and Kentucky Division of Water regarding nutrients and pathogens in Floyds Fork.

The Floyds Fork Environmental Association also sponsors field trips for schoolchildren, bike and hike events and bird-watching walks.

By founding a sustainability committee in local government and starting a website called Green Triangle, Louisville's District 9 Councilwoman **Tina Ward-Pugh** leads the way in green thinking. Her environmental related accomplishments include:

- serving on the Metropolitan Sewer District's Wet Weather Team Stakeholder Group;
- solving a drainage problem using a "green" approach of re-contouring the road bed and adding rain gardens to absorb heavy rain, becoming a model solution for the community;
- helping to start a one-acre community garden called Billy Goat Hill at 2004 Payne St. in Louisville, the site of a former landfill;
- developing a tree canopy master plan for Frankfort Avenue; and

- forging partnerships to address storm water problems.

The sustainability committee addresses matters such as alternative energy, recycling, greenways, brownfields and air pollution among other topics.

**The Green Institute**, Louisville, provides a 12-week course for business and community leaders. The homework results in community projects such as creating rain gardens; fixing downspout disconnections; planting trees to reduce the heat island effect; and developing a neighborhood weatherization squad among many other noteworthy projects. The institute is operated by the Center for Neighborhoods, directed by Lisa Dettlinger and Ben Evans.

With a degree in soil science from the University of Kentucky, **Leslie Preston Meredith** teaches science and social studies at West Hardin Middle School in Cecilia, Ky., and runs the school's Green Club. Her many projects include:

- Monitoring school buses for length of idling time while waiting for students to load and unload, resulting in a policy change from the school board that reduces idling time by 34 percent.
- A grant application to buy a watershed and soil erosion model so her students can learn about point and non-point source pollution and how it affects groundwater.
- Secured \$3,000 to start a native prairie restoration project in which students planted, mulched and watered trees for a mini-prairie on school grounds. Every three years, the parcel requires a controlled burn for maintenance. The three-acre prairie does not have to be mowed, saving \$1,529 annually for the district.
- A Model Green and Healthy School certification for West Hardin, making it the only middle school in the state to be so certified.

In collaboration with the superintendent and the Hardin County solid waste coordinator, Meredith secured a recycling trailer located across from the school, resulting in easy access to recycling for local residents.

As state director of The Nature Conservancy of Kentucky, **Terry Cook** is known for forging partnerships and raising funds for the conservation of natural areas across the state. Some of his successes include the following:

- Lobbying successfully for stronger conservation programs and tax credits for landowners who want to preserve and protect their natural areas, and developing a permanent funding source for this effort; providing a blueprint for coordinating conservation growth.
- Through his efforts, the Nature Conservancy has protected more than 46,000 acres of diverse habitat and landscapes across the state. By leveraging the goodwill and resources of many partners in both private and public sectors, the Nature Conservancy has helped conserve more than 100,000 acres.
- Via the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative, Cook helped landowners restore and protect wetland habitats for wildlife with natural buffers that improve water quality locally and throughout the river basin.
- The conservancy and its supporters funded a voter's survey that demonstrated strong support for investing in Kentucky's clean water and natural beauty. This effort resulted with Gov. Steve Beshear signing House Bill 281, a new law that enables nonprofit land trust organizations to competitively apply for land acquisition funds from the Kentucky Heritage Land Conservation Fund (KHLCF).

**The Bluegrass Youth Sustainability Council** is made up of environmentally conscience high school student leaders from both private and public schools in Lexington. The organization's major projects to date include:

- Partnering with local elementary schools to design, maintain and develop curriculum for campus rain gardens;
- Conducting occupant behavior energy audits to provide feedback for Lexington- Fayette Urban County Government and Fayette County Public Schools administrative buildings;
- Installing two water bottle refilling stations in each public and private high school. A ticker counter tracks how many plastic water bottles have been diverted from landfills – the count is now at 128,000;

As a National Board Certified Teacher in biological sciences, **Karin Ceralde** teaches advanced placement courses to students at Shelby County High School. Her students participate every year in the citizen-science project called the Great Backyard Bird Count in collaboration with the National Audubon Society. Its purpose is to collect data on wild birds, to create a real-time snapshot of bird populations, to learn more about how the birds are doing and how to protect them and the environment we share.

**The DuPont-Louisville Works Plant**, located in West Louisville's Rubbertown area, is the world's only supplier of Vinyl Fluoride (VF), a chemical used in the manufacture of solar panels. In an effort to produce VF more efficiently while reducing the plant's environmental footprint, DuPont introduced a new process in early 2012 to reduce the amount of hazardous waste generated by the manufacturing process. In addition to reducing the quantity of hazardous waste generated, the project improved safety performance by eliminating potential occupational health exposure to employees working with the material.

The **Public Service award** went to **Kurt Mason with the Natural Resources Conservation Service**.

Cleaning up a watershed is no easy feat, but that is what Mason has pledged to do in focusing attention on Beargrass Creek in Louisville. An advocate for land preservation and environmental education, he uses his expertise in the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to zero in on reducing harmful runoff.

Under Mason's guidance, workshops and educational forums have been held on natural buffers and vital techniques. His goal has been to influence decisions at the level of local government to improve water quality and to help citizens understand how their choices affect the watershed.

Mason, from Scott County, promotes placing land into conservation easements and stakeholder groups to build citizen involvement. In 1990, he helped bring some of Kentucky's most sensitive and precious land resources under the protection of conservation entities through his work with the Nature Conservancy of Kentucky. In Jefferson and Oldham counties, 1,000 acres have been protected due to his work with private landowners.

The **Lifetime Achievement award recipient** is **Gordon Garner, a civil engineer from Louisville**.

Improved sanitation leads to improved public health. That's why civil engineer Garner has devoted a 32-year career to the engineering and design of public works for the benefit of the general public.

As executive director of the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) for 18 years, Garner oversaw a sewer expansion program, adding up to 5,000 new customers each year. Other achievements include:

- storm water and flood protection utility service with over \$1 billion invested in capital improvements;
- a world-class computer mapping/geographic information system (LOJIC) , an important tool for all city and county planning activities;
- participation and sponsorship of the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economics Principles and a Greenways Program which incorporated sound environmental principles in all MSD projects; and
- constructed three new wastewater plants and capacity/performance upgrades at four other major wastewater plants

He has served on many boards and commissions and helped draft and secure legislative approval for design/build in Kentucky in order to pursue a solid pelletization facility, and the Floyds Fork Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Garner has been selected as a Top 10 Public Works Leader and life member by the American Public Works Association. Currently, he is vice president of CH2M HILL Engineering firm.

To learn more, visit <http://egc.ky.gov>.

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